

POLICY TITLE: Material Selection Policy

ADOPTION/LAST REVIEW: Adopted 1/19/88, Revised 4/12/94; 5/18/2021; 5/15/2025

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this policy is to guide librarians and to inform the public about the principles upon which decisions are made. A policy cannot replace the judgment of librarians, but stating goals will assist them in choosing from the best array of available materials.

The term "materials," as used in this document, refers to books, graphics, audio recordings, film, video, computer files, etc.

In the formulation or revising of these objectives, the library is guided by professional standards. It supports and is supported by the American Library Association Library "Bill of Rights" and "Freedom to Read" statements; the American Film and Video Association's "Freedom to View" statement; and the "Resolution on the Constitutional Protection of Library Materials, Services and Programs".

The library strives to stimulate not only learning but also concern and understanding. It attempts to provide materials and guidance in their use so that as many people as possible can utilize the collective knowledge of humankind. It is vitally important that every citizen today have ready access to the world of ideas, information and creative experience.

## I. SELECTION OF MATERIALS

The authority and responsibility for the selection of library materials lies with the Library Director and, under their direction, delegated to the professional staff who are qualified for this activity by reason of education, training, and experience. Suggestions are welcome and are given serious consideration within the criteria for selection.

### A. Adult and Reference

Designated librarians are responsible for selecting materials for persons 18 years of age and older. Selection must be as broad in scope as the interests of the community. The collection, besides aiming at a variety and depth in content, must recognize a wide range of reading ability.

## B. Youth

Designated librarians are responsible for selecting materials for the collection that satisfy the information, recreational and cultural reading needs and potentials of children and teens from preschool to age 17. Materials are judged on their own literary and artistic merits, their contributions to the balance of the total collection, and their suitability of content and vocabulary to the age of the readers.

## II. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

To build collections of merit and significance, materials must be measured by objective guidelines. All acquisitions, whether purchased or donated, are considered in terms of the following standards. Clearly, however, an item need not meet all of the criteria in order to be acceptable. When judging the quality of materials several standards and combinations of standards may be used, as some materials may be judged on artistic merit, while others are considered because of scholarship, value as human documents, or ability to satisfy the recreational and entertainment needs of the community.

### A. General Criteria

1. Suitability of physical form for library use.
2. Insight into human and social conditions.
3. Suitability of subject and style for intended audience.
4. Present and potential relevance to community needs.
5. Appropriateness and effectiveness of medium to content.
6. Importance as a document of the times.
7. Relation to existing collection and other materials on the subject.
8. Reputation and/or significance of author/artist.
9. Attention given by critics, reviewers, and the public.
10. Quality of writing and/or presentation.

### B. Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works of Information and Opinion.

1. Authority.
2. Comprehensiveness and depth of treatment.
3. Clarity, accuracy, and logic of presentation.
4. Statement of challenging or original point of view.

### C. Specific Criteria for the Evaluation of Works of Imagination.

1. Representation of important movement (literary or social), genre, trend, or national culture.

2. Vitality and originality.
3. Artistic presentation and experimentation.
4. Sustained interest.
5. Effective characterization.
6. Authenticity of historical, regional, or social setting.

#### D. Other Criteria.

1. Widespread demand. Such items may or may not meet the general and specific criteria in material selection, but it shall be considered an important factor.
2. Social and intellectual changes in the climate of the community with continuing re-evaluation of materials to meet new conditions.
3. Flexible attitudes to reflect a rapidly changing society. Consideration of new forms and new styles of expression.
4. Controversial or complicated questions, including unpopular and unorthodox positions, covered from various points of view. The library does not promote particular beliefs or views. Resources should be provided whereby the individual can examine issues freely and make their own choice.

### III. GIFTS

A gift to the library may consist of materials or of funds for the purchase of materials. Funds may be given for acquiring materials recommended by the library's staff or for the purchase of specific items suggested by the donor. The library encourages gifts not earmarked for specific items in order to permit the most flexible use of the donation.

Gift additions must meet the same selection criteria as purchased materials. In some cases, materials are received or purchased which could not have been acquired from library funds because of budget limitations. If gifts of marginal value are offered, processing costs, duplication of titles, and use of shelf space are considered before addition to the collection. Used materials donated to the library are assessed for their suitability for the library collection and ~~are~~ may be given to the Friends of the Marshfield Public Library for their book sale.

Gifts are accepted subject to the following limitations:

1. The library retains unconditional ownership of the gift.
2. The library makes the final decision on the use or other disposition of the gift.
3. The library reserves the right to decide the conditions of display, housing and

access to the materials.

#### IV. ISSUES RELATED TO ACCESS AND INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM

The library recognizes that many library materials are controversial and that any item may offend some patrons. Selection is not made on the basis of any anticipated approval or disapproval, but solely on the merits of the work in relation to developing the library's collection and serving a wide variety of patron needs and interests.

Responsibility for what minors read rests with parents or legal guardians. The library does not serve a parental role. Selection of adult material is not limited by the possibility that materials may come into the possession of minors.

The library does not restrict access to any of its materials or services based on age. Any parent wishing to restrict (until graduation from eighth grade) their minor child's borrowing privileges to only those materials in the children's section, must so advise the library in writing. The library will then enter the restriction into the computer system so that no adult Marshfield Public Library materials can be borrowed with that card.

If a parent wishes to continue the restriction after eighth grade, the library must be informed of that wish in writing and the restriction will be extended until the child becomes 18 years old. Parents are advised that materials selected for ninth grade level and beyond are housed in the adult and teen departments; a teenager with a restricted library card would not be able to borrow adult materials.

Should a patron have an objection to an item in the collection, forms for requesting reconsideration of that item are available at the library service desks.

#### V. WEEDING AND DISPOSITION OF WEEDED MATERIALS

For proper maintenance of the library's collection, it becomes necessary to remove materials that are no longer relevant in that they have become outdated or inaccurate with the passing of time and the acquisition of knowledge. It may also become necessary, as the library adds more materials, to remove old materials that are no longer used by or of interest to the public.

When removing an item from the collection, the following are considered:

1. How long has the material remained in the library without being used?

2. Is the information found therein incorrect or misleading because of new information or discoveries?
3. Does the library own more recent and more accurate material on the same subject?
5. Is there any historical significance that may make the material valuable at present or in the future?
5. Is this work a standard in its particular field?
6. What is the general condition of the material?

Materials will be disposed of at the discretion of the library director.